



## PLAYS AND PLAYERS

TO ENTER STELLAR ROLE



Laura Hope Crews, formerly leading lady for Otis Skinner in "His Grace the Countess," and for the past two seasons in support of Margaret Angello and Henry Miller in "The Great Divide," is the latest candidate for starring honors. She will make her stellar venture next season in a new play of modern American life by Edgar Allan Woolf, entitled "A Queen's Garden."

### A ROYAL CATASTROPHE.

Throne Tack a Tumble with King, Queen and All.

The king and queen of France were surrounded with comminatory "sudden" at the Lyric theater at New York recently. So were half a dozen of their favorite courtiers—all flung down with their sovereigns in a heap, with the throne on top of them and the crown props sticking into their ribs.

It was the fourth act of E. T. Sothern's revival of "If I Were King." Mr. Sothern, the pauper hero, stood in front of the throne making his famous speech to King Louis and Louis' wife, Louis was Malcolm Bradley, and Miss McLean sat beside him as his royal spouse. Round about them were a hundred courtiers and the playhouse that had followed Jules Verne into the throne room to hear him make his plea.

Just as Sothern got to the critical point, where everybody sat listening in hushed tones with bated breath, there came a c-r-a-c-k! crack! crack! and the king and the queen fell back, and the king and the queen and the courtiers disappeared from view behind the draperies.

"Let me out," came the voice of his imperial majesty, and from the debris heaved up a little shriek from his royal consort.

Mr. Sothern stood three or four moments with arm upraised, uncertain whether to continue his harangue to his vanished sovereigns. But the audience broke out laughing just then, and he rang down the curtain in triumph.

Fifteen minutes later the interrupted oration was resumed, with Louis and his wife back on an understudy throne. Miss McLean's slightly scratched arm was the only mark left by the royal catastrophe.

### He Smelled Throe.

Among the several well known actors famed for quick wit, epigram and repartee, William Collier, the comedian, holds high place. At a rehearsal of one of Collier's plays, a young actor, who had the small part of "waiter," left the stage two or three times between the scenes where he had long waits. Being a warm, cheerful day, these periods of rest were spent "next door," where cooling drink was dispensed. In one of Collier's scenes the young actor's business was to enter with two filled glasses on a tray. On this occasion, when his cue came, the "waiter" entered and approached Collier, who noticed that the young man's gait was not as steady as it should have been. When the tray was presented, Collier, in a critical tone, said:

"That order was for two cocktails, young man."

Not absolutely sure but that the tray might contain double the number it should have held, the "waiter" surveyed it with an uncertain eye for but a minute, then finally said:

"I can see only two, sir—yes, I'm certain there are only two."

"Well," replied the comedian, significantly, "I'm sure that I smell throe."

### HOW CHORUS GIRLS FEED.

When Johnny Foots the Bill at Night, and the Next Day.

When Bobby takes charming Clarice, the clever chanteuse, or Angelica, the third girl from the end in the last row, out to supper after the show, he feeds her on milk and honey—or would if they were the most expensive items on the bill of fare. He is willing to buy her everything that her little heart desires. The more expensive they are the better he likes it, for then he can show he is a sport.

Clarice, nothing loath, looks at the price before she looks at the item of food and orders the ones with the big figures opposite. She cheerfully stows away oysters, almonquin, terrapin, Baltimore, paprika chicken, Hon grolse, mallard a la Richelle, pomme de terre a la Parisienne, and then, pausing for breath, starts in with a new layout. Sometimes she will fall for a big name, even though it doesn't cost more than 40 cents, but is highly indignant to find that pomme de terre a la Julienne is nothing but spuds, shoe-string style, and that einge-machtes is veal disguised with an alias.

The provider of all this good cheer sometimes wonders how the dainty maiden can gobble up so much food, but he wouldn't be so surprised if he knew how the fair creature wined and dined when she was buying her own dinners.

The girl, who at night, when some man afflicted with fatty degeneration of the pocketbook is paying for the supper, orders vintage of '93 at nine dollars a throw, fights her way into a no-nonsense rest the next day and hunts for soup at two cents a plate, balances a one-cent cup of coffee in one hand while grabbing a five-cent dish of meat with the other, and pays the cashier, probably 12 cents for the square meal that she has purchased for herself.

### GOSSIP OF THE STAGE.

James K. Hackett is to head the stock company at the Columbia theater, Washington, for a few weeks this summer, opening on May 11. Several of his successful plays will be presented.

Eugene Walters, author of "Paid in Full," will write a play for Miss Viola Allen's use next season.

Miss Eleanor Roberts hopes to go to London this summer to appear in "Salome Jane."

Miss Lulu Glaser will appear next season under the Shubert management in the new Viennese opera "Ein Toller Haderl" ("The Girl Who Dared").

Margaret Wycherly is going into vaudeville, and says that she has a novelty.

George Fawcett, who is now playing in "The Squaw Man," in London, is planning to revive "Pudd'nhead Wilson" over there.

## The Widow

By Don Mark Lemon

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The body had lain in the pond for a week and consequently it was a bit past recognition when found, but as it wore the clothes of Carl Johnson, in the pockets of which was that party's pocketbook and knife, and as Carl Johnson had suddenly disappeared about a week before, the coroner held that the body was that of Carl Johnson.

No one, however, lost any sleep from the fact that Johnson had walked into the pond and afterwards failed to walk out. He was notoriously stingy, unkempt and drunken, and so few of the villagers had even taken any interest in the drowned man that his death was scarcely discussed.

But men are not wholly done with, even though they are drowned and food for fishes. There is always or generally some property left behind, and always or generally there is someone to claim the property.

In the case of Carl Johnson it was a surprise from the word, money. No one in the village had been aware that the drowned man was married; nevertheless he was no sooner buried than there appeared on the scene a certain stunning blonde, who claimed that she was his widow.

It seems that the deceased had met her the summer before while transacting some business in the city and that they had been married after a very brief courtship. The lady had chosen to remain in the metropolis until her husband could wind up his business at Riverside and rejoin her, while as evidence of her marriage to the deceased, and as proof of their mutual affection, certain letters had passed between the two, and when the first of these love epistles was read in court the villagers sat up and took notice.

Indeed, the letter was so interesting that more than one farmer left his hay and came seven miles to court, but that rests between those farmers and their wives, and does not necessarily pertain Bereto.

There was now subpoenaed from the city a certain tall, slim clergyman, whose hair and manners were as smooth as vaseline and urbanity could make him.

He testified that he had officiated at the marriage of the lady and the deceased Carl Johnson, and that he had known the widow since her baptism, at which ceremony he had also officiated. The farmers' wives and villagers could hardly credit this last statement. The clergyman looked too youthful, but then the stunning blonde was very, very young—and very, very disconsolate.

The case progressed with the court room crowded to the doors and a few rustics sitting outside in their teams, discussing what a fool Johnson had made of himself down in the city, and wondering if they could get off from haying and go and do likewise.

Suddenly the people began pouring from the courtroom, not willingly, however, but angrily, and with many a backward look. The court had been cleared that certain of the love letters that had passed between the deceased and his widow might be read only in the hearing of the judge, clients, attorneys, jurors and clerk.

The widow had begged it, blushing, tearfully; her lawyer had requested it, while the judge had thought it best.

The letters were then read and the case went to the jury, after an eloquent appeal upon the part of the attorney for the widow, in which that lady's tender affection for the deceased was so dramatically drawn that she fell to sobbing on the clergyman's shoulder.

Ten minutes after retiring the jurors filed back into the courtroom and the foreman reported a verdict favorable to the widow as against a distant relative of the deceased, who had contested the widow's claim.

The farmers and villagers received the verdict with an enthusiasm worthy of dollar wheat and the stunning blonde, with all due sweetness and modesty, took possession of the farm and money of Carl Johnson, deceased, the clergyman remaining with her as an impeccable chaperon.

Then one day the legally dead Carl Johnson walked into the village and asked the news. When he got it, got it all—his drowning—the widow, the clergyman—the court's decision—he ran his neglected finger nails through his unkempt hair and spat copiously.

"Come along, boys," he said. "I'll introduce you to her. A stunning blonde, you say? Young, plump, big blue eyes and a little foot? Yes, that's her! That's her, all right! She's my wife and—we're going to settle right down and enjoy ourselves."

Followed by a dozen friends, Johnson entered his farmhouse, where the widow and clergyman were seated at tea, eating honey and biscuits very lovingly together.

At sight of the dead come to life, the widow threw up her hands and fainted, while the impeccable clergyman distinctly said damn. But then he had spilled his tea over his knees and hot tea is certainly hot.

Johnson sought to take the unconscious form of the widow into his arms and cover the rosy mouth with kisses, but he was stayed by the clergyman.

"What have you got to say about it?" demanded the legally dead Johnson. "Didn't you swear in court that you married me and her?"

The clergyman paled and stared past the other through the open door, when suddenly the widow came from

her swoon and slapped the amorous Johnson resoundingly.

"Oh, you dreadful, dirty creature!" she cried. "Your mouth is full of tobacco; how dare you attempt to kiss me!"

Johnson scratched his greasy chin. "I call this a nice way to treat your own dead husband come to life!"

"My husband! You!" The stunning blonde looked scorn unutterable.

"What! ain't you?" demanded Johnson. "Ugh!" the lady shivered.

"How about them letters?" leered the other. "The letters I wrote and them you wrote me! Them beauties they had to clear the court 'fore the judge would let 'em be read! How about them?"

The widow retreated nearer the clergyman, and Johnson turned to his friends. "I guess I won't need you folks any longer," he said. "Tell everybody, how me and my wife are as happy as two kittens to be in one another's arms again." Then he turned on the clergyman. "And you pack along, too. Me and my wife want to be alone. Don't we, sweetcakes?"

The lady took the clergyman's arm. "Don't leave me, Cyril, dear. Don't let that horrid creature attempt to kiss me again!" Suddenly her wum-



His Widow.

an's cunning reassured itself and she cried: "You are an impostor, sir! You are not my Carl!"

Carl Johnson started to laugh, but hearing a murmur at his back turned angrily about.

"You all know me! Am I Carl Johnson, or ain't I?"

"You look like him," admitted one of his friends. "But you are dead in the law and you will have to get out papers and be brought back to life before you can kiss the lady."

The clergyman stepped forward and spoke with his former urbanity: "Such is precisely the case, sir. This lady is the widow of one Carl Johnson, who is legally held to be dead, and until you prove you are that, Carl Johnson you have no claim upon her. I advise you to leave the house at once."

"Leave my own house! I guess not!" growled Johnson.

"Then this gentleman and I will, sir!" The widow swept from the room and returning quickly with her hat and cloak, under which latter article of apparel there was concealed a small but heavy satchel, she offered her arm to the clergyman, and the pair hurried through the door and down the road.

"Good-by, sweetcakes!" leered Johnson over his gate. "Them letters certainly were the kind I'd have writ you, and you're the prettiest peach that ever fell over my fence and rolled out again."

A shrug of the stunning shoulders was the only sign that the lady had heard him, then the pair was lost by a turn of the road. Johnson scratched his greasy chin and leered at his neighbors.

"You heard about them letters! Well, you beat them, and then you beat—her!"

### FAMINES CARRY OFF MILLIONS.

Horrible Death Rate in India from This Cause.

The periodical famines in India, which have from time to time horrified the civilized world, now seem to have become epidemic. Millions of the native population have died from this cause during the past few years, and no sign of improvement exists. The viceroy of India, in a telegram sent to London during the third week of January, stated that the total number of persons in receipt of state relief in British India considerably exceeds 223,000, that the number is steadily increasing, that prices are rising, that the rise in prices is telling severely upon the poorer population, especially in the towns, and that, although the worst signs of acute distress are not yet manifest, still the suffering is great.

The third Burmese government forecast of the rice crop is singularly appropriate in this connection. The report, which deals with a territory containing about 96 per cent. of the total area under rice in British India and Burma, gives as the area under cultivation 1,295,964 acres, an increase of 232,271 acres. Prospects are good, the surplus available for export being estimated at 2,514,000 tons of cargo rice, equivalent to 42,610,160 hundred-weight of cleaned rice.

This is a striking commentary upon modern civilization in India.—Harper's Weekly.

## FIFTEEN YEARS OF KEEN SUFFERING

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